Against technology

Pierleone Porcu

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A perspective based on the need to completely destroy technology is confusing to many comrades, and a considerable number of them refuse to accept it. They find it more reasonable and realistic to consider only the problem of destroying so-called hard technology (all kinds of nuclear armaments, asbestos, etc.). They consider soft technology (electronics, information technology, etc.) socially useful and think they will be able to make good use of it in the future, as though the latter could be detached from the logic of domination that produced and developed it.

In this way comrades are demonstrating an "enlightened" positivist attitude to science. They claim the instruments produced by technological and scientific knowledge are neutral, and only critizise the bad social use that Power puts them to.

We think on the contrary, that the instruments created by Power cannot fail to obey the logic that created them. They are totally functional to its aims no matter who uses them and in spite of any apparent advantages they might bring to society.

We are against those who are alwayys trying to justify things, saying that there is some good at the base of everything, and it deserves to be presented. Moreover, we think it is useful to place an element of doubt into the swamp of certainties and commonplaces that abound.

Those who maintain there is an absolute need for existing technology are the bosses, governors and their multitude of servants. They all have good reason for doing so, no doubt. Comrades, on the other hand, should have just have as good reasons for always being suspicious of such attitudes. Things become tragic when we see an identity of viewpoint between those in power and those struggling against it.

All the base technology that is used in every field of social life today comes from military research. Its civil use obeys this logic far more than we immediately understand. Until now all we have succeeded in demonstrating has been the precise, scientific, authoritarian project at organisational level. It is important to understand the unconscious mechanisms that operate at mass level, allowing the power structure to overcome people's initial rejection and gain their full support. Only a few people contest cybernetic command. The general tendency is a feeling of inevitability. It is coming to be considered indispensable, therefore socially useful. Anyone who points out the need for the total destruction of the technological apparatus produced by capital is passed off as an irresponsible madman who wants to take civilisation back to the Stone Age.

This does not have to be the case, if one thinks about it. Present day technology is the practical result of a form of knowledge that matured during capital's industrial development. It is always

motivated by those who are in power. To want to safeguard some technologies over others is to put an obstacle in the way of the total destruction of the whole productive order of dominion. It also means to put a limit on revolutionary action and maintain an ambigous social relationship with such structures.

So those who, although they say they are revolutionary, support the need to safeguard part of capital's productive technology, do not see that in doing so they are lending a hand to the declared reformists. The latter, more coherently, support a continual modification of all the organisms of power in such a way that the system is always functional and updated to meet the new needs of domination and social change.

Our radical project to destroy technology must be within the revolutionary process, and we should put no limits on the course of this or circumscribe it to within our presently limited knowledge.

The problem of a contemporary social revolution cannot be resolved with recourse to the knowledge that has been acquired until now and which is limited by the interests of Power. We are against those who see present day knowledge as something that has reached its conclusion.

As for how things stand now: the so-called scientists who are studying artificial intelligence or the application of present-day technology in other fields, are in fact scientific workers. They are highly specialized in one sector (the scientific one) but most of them are unaware of what is happening in other fields of research, not to mention the rest of society which they often neglect completely in their aseptic laboratories.

The way those scientific workers think greatly resembles the machines they project. They apply binary logic and are basically incapable of thinking beyond this. There is no creative reasoning, they cannot bring any development of thought into the field of knowledge.

It is only our ignorance that makes us consider them great brains. This is an important factor that should be gone into further. Scientists are in fact the new intermediate class produced by the technological revolution.

The greatest discoveries have always been made when the principle of authority was absent or vacillating at all levels – as happened at the beginning of the century – and this also applies to the field of science. We cannot be revoltionaries concerning only the one social structure we do not accept, but must be so in all fields, including the scientific one. The dominating order we want to destroy has roots everywhere, therefore should be attacked everywhere.

The only attitude to have towards the bosses of science is that of discerning what they are hiding behind all the things that seem innocuous and humane to the profane public.

This is very important as we are used to being aware of only the most noticable and superficial things around us. The bosses and their servants take great care to show us certain things, just enough to capture our innate curiosity, pushing us to look at things that in reality are of no importance. We thus miss out the most important things that are brought about without our knowledge, to our cost. We should not underestimate the enemy's intelligence. The aim of those who dominate is to use all the scientific instruments that present-day scientific knowledge has to offer, not to alleviate suffering but to continue it within a set of relations that are modified from time to time. Capital and state find themselves obliged to carry out this incessant modification because of the unrelenting struggle that the proletariat carry on against them daily. In fact, notwithstanding the great transferral of wealth that takes place every day in the attack on the exploited, it would not take much for the latter to thwart the bosses' projects.

Once they show their intention to destroy things radically, revolutionaries gain an immeasurable advantage, as the attack on the state and capital becomes one that knows no limits and intends to concede nothing to the enemy. This is why it is necessary to destroy the entire technological apparatus, beyond the use that anyone may think to make of it in the future. It will prevent the struggle from falling into the trap laid by the radical reformists who, from the partial destruction of the structures of domination have made the starting point for restructuring.

We are therefore against those who support political criticism, even in the field of science, because such a critque always tries to reduce the reasons for radical opposition to a simple question of detail concerning certain operative choices. In this way the supporters of the political critique are looking for adjustment and compromise with the class enemy who is intelligently disposed to formally modifying its own position, with the aim of restructuring a new, more rational consensus around the threatening institutions.

No fetish should remain in our minds. If we have had the strength to build ourselves a thousand chains we also have the power to break them. The decision to push ourselves beyond the barriers of prejudice and taboo is up to us.

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